India made proposals for enhancing its cooperation with ASEAN, including those on an Indian-ASEAN broadband high speed network, a net portal to enable visually impaired person access the internet, joint research and development in medicines, stockpiling of rarely used drugs in the region, cooperation for production of seed and exchange of germplasm for fruits and vegetables. The Prime Minister also offered concessional lines of credit upto US$200 million to eligible member countries of ASEAN. An agreement on "India-ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity" that sets out a vision for a long term partnership between India and ASEAN was signed during the Summit. India-ASEAN cooperation is implemented through established mechanisms and regular discussions at the political and official level.

Offer of FBI'S help to India

1496. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US Ambassador has recently offered the assistance of Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate the serial blasts in the North Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any such offer has been received from any European countries also;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government are aware that the Government of United States of America have circulated a document earlier which seeks to alienate the North Eastern Region from the country; and

(f) whether Government have taken a view of this offer of assistance keeping in view the security of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The offer of assistance was received by Ministry of Home Affairs in the form of a letter dated October, 4, 2004 written by Ambassador of USA.

(c) and (e) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(f) Government's position is that cooperative efforts in the field of counter-terrorism would be discussed within the existing framework of cooperation for such matters.

Extradition Treaty with Thailand

1497. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Thailand are finalising an extradition treaty;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be signed; and

(c) what is the likely achievement of the treaty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

(b) The discussions for concluding an Extradition Treaty with Thailand are at initial stage.

(c) Once in force, the Extradition Treaty will provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of fugitive offenders charged with extraditable offences.

Death of Indian Haj Pilgrims

1498. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian Haj pilgrims who lost their lives in Saudi Arabia during Haj pilgrimage in 2004 due to stampede and other causes, separately; and

(b) the nature and extent of help provided by the Government of India and Saudi Arabia to the families of those who lost their lives during the pilgrimage?